

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 21 was objected to for informalities and has been amended appropriately to obviate the objection.

Claim 30 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,058,290 to Katagiri (hereinafter "Katagiri"). For the following reasons, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding claim 30, Katagiri does not teach "inputting a character sequence designated by a user" and "retrieving from the storage device all of the messages that contain the character sequence designated in the step of inputting," as required. The Examiner cites, in part, column 5, lines 11-27 of Katagiri as teaching "inputting a character sequence designated by a user" of claim 30. Katagiri teaches that a user designates a message for erasure (pseudo erasure). However, Katagiri does not teach that the user may choose a character sequence for designating the message. The claimed invention requires that the character sequence that is input is *designated by a user*. Further, Katagiri teaches a *predetermined* code word as a read-inhibition code word. It is clear from the disclosure of Katagiri that the read-inhibition codeword is not user determinable, but rather it is built into the program. Since the codeword is predetermined, there is no teaching of inputting a character sequence, as in the present invention. There is nothing in Katagiri that discloses inputting a user-designated character sequence and then retrieving messages that contain this character sequence, as in claim 30. Since every limitation of claim 30 is not taught, claim 30 is patentable over Katagiri.

Claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,426,424 to Vanden Heuvel (hereinafter "Vanden Hauvel") in view of Katagiri. It appears that the Examiner also intended to include claim 26 in this rejection, and thus Applicant has treated the rejection as such.

Claims 27 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Vanden Heuvel in view of Katagiri and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,239,679 to Murai.

For the following reasons, the rejections have been overcome.

In accordance with 35 U.S.C. 103(c) Applicant's undersigned representative hereby submits that the subject matter of the Katagiri patent and the presently claimed invention was commonly owned by Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. and/or subject to an obligation of assignment to Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. at the time the claimed invention was made. Further, since the present application was filed on June 11, 1999, prior to the May 2, 2000 publication of the Katagiri patent, the Katagiri patent is only available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g). Therefore, under 35 U.S.C. 103(c), the Katagiri patent cannot be used for rejecting the present claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Thus, each of the above-stated rejections that relies upon the Katagiri patent cannot stand, and claims 25-28 are patentable over the prior art of record.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

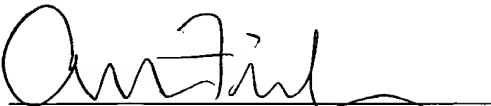
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to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 31812.

Respectfully submitted,

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